

State of California  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
June 10, 2004

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: NPDES PERMIT REISSUANCE: WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR SWEETWATER AUTHORITY, LOWER SWEETWATER RIVER BASIN, GROUNDWATER DMINERALIZATION PLANT, SAN DIEGO COUNTY (TENTATIVE ORDER NO. R9-2004-0111, NPDES PERMIT NO. CA0108952) (Paul J. Richter)

PURPOSE: If necessary, to hold a public hearing and receive comments from interested parties regarding the tentative NPDES permit for waste discharge requirements for the Demineralization Plant for the Sweetwater Authority.

PUBLIC NOTICE: The NPDES permit hearing notice was published in the San Diego Union-Tribune on May 7, 2004 for the Regional Board meeting scheduled for June 9, 2004. Subsequently, the Regional Board changed the meeting date to Thursday, June 10, 2004. On May 18, 2004 a letter was sent to the interested parties notifying them of the change to the June 10, 2004 meeting date.

Copies of the tentative Order were mailed on May 7, 2004 to the discharger and to all known interested parties and agencies. Copies were made available for public review at the Regional Board office on May 7, 2004.

These actions served as the 30-day official public notification for this action, as required by Title 40, Section 124.10 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

DISCUSSION: Tentative Order No. R9-2004-0111 renews the NPDES permit for the discharge of up to 0.8 million gallons per day (mgd) of brine concentrate from Sweetwater Authority's demineralization plant to the Upper Paradise Creek Flood Control Channel, a tributary to the Sweetwater River and San Diego Bay.

The demineralization plant has been in operation since January 2000. There have been no significant changes in the volume or characteristics of the brine discharge since that time.

The pollutant of main concern in the brine discharge is copper. The existing Order (No. 99-30) specifies an effluent limitation for copper of 3.1 µg/l (total dissolved). The effluent limitation for copper in the tentative Order is expressed in the total recoverable rather than total dissolved form. The new limitation for copper is 3.73 µg/l (total recoverable). The use of a total recoverable instead of a total dissolved effluent limitation was consistent with the *Policy for Implementation of Toxic Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California* (Implementation Policy) and the provisions of the California Toxic Rule (CTR).

All other effluent limitations, prohibitions, or monitoring requirements contained in the tentative Order are the same or more stringent than those in Order No. 99-30.

See attached Staff Report dated May 19, 2004 for a more detailed discussion of this Item.

COMPLIANCE:

On March 1, 2004 the chronic toxicity analysis failed to meet the limitation of No Observable Effect Level (NOEL) in the brine discharge. The limitation requires NOEL in 100% effluent. The discharge had an NOEL in 12.5% solution of effluent. Sweetwater Authority reported that it has initiated a Corrective Action Plan to verify the toxicity results through additional monitoring and review of monitoring procedures.

LEGAL CONCERNS:

None.

SUPPORTING  
DOCUMENTS:

1. Location map and vicinity map.
2. Staff Report dated May 19, 2004.
3. Tentative Order No. R9-2004-0111 (including the Monitoring and Reporting Program and the Fact Sheet).
4. Transmittal Letter dated May 7, 2004.
5. Affidavit of Publication for public notice dated May 7, 2004.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt tentative Order No. R9-2004-0111.